Commercial agreements with Iraq

1719. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the existing commercial bilateral agreements with Iraq;

(b) whether Government have analysed impact of US attacl^ on Iraq to covet crude stock bilateral agreements;

(c) If so, the steps taken to protect the commercial interest of India with Iraq; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Under the ongoing Sanctions Regime, all existing commercial exchanges with Iraq are governed by the Oil for Food Programme administered by the UN Office of the Iraq Programme. In the twelve six-monthly phases since the introductifen of this programme in 1996, Indian companies have won export contracts valued at approximately $ 1.1 billion.

(b) India does not have any bilateral agreements for supply of oil and has not lifted crude directly from Iraq since December, 2000. Some disruption of oil supplies and an increase in prices from other Gulf suppliers can be expected.

(c) and (d) the outbreak of hostilities in the region would affect commercial contracts under implementation or which have not been implemented. India has taken up this matter with the Office of the Iraq Programme in the United Nations.

Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding

1720. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding has not been awarded since 1995;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) how the prize money of Rs. 25 lakh has been utilized over the years since then; and